

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 1, 2009

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

As Members of Congress who are committed to ending hunger here in the United States, we are writing to request a meeting to discuss USDA's plans to address hunger and nutrition in the United States and the plans to implement President Obama's commitment to ending child hunger by 2015.

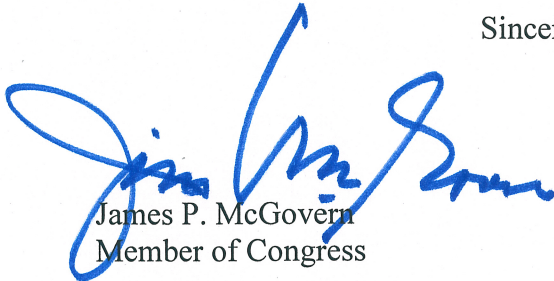
Between focusing on the H1N1 virus to promoting various USDA priorities to a prolonged and extended confirmation process for many USDA nominees, we recognize the challenges you have faced in your first year as Secretary. We recognize the commitment the Administration has made to fighting hunger by providing increases in the FY 2010 requests for child nutrition programs, commodity assistance programs, the WIC program and SNAP. However, these increases alone will not achieve our shared goals in the fight against hunger.

It is clear hunger is getting worse here at home and we feel a sense of urgency to take action. We hope this sense is shared at the Department and would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this issue with you or your team at USDA. Whether addressed through reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Programs and the Farm Bill or through new legislation, any plan to end child hunger by 2015 will undoubtedly require Congressional action. It is with this concern that we respectfully request that you convene a series of discussions on the issue of hunger and nutrition in the United States and how the Obama Administration plans on addressing this issue.

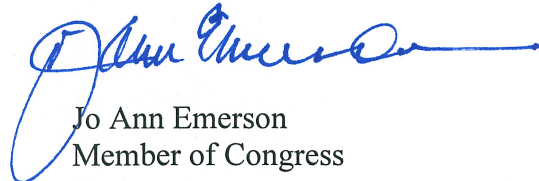
Specifically, we urge you to convene a meeting among a small group of key House and Senate Members who are committed to this issue to discuss USDA's plans to combat hunger here in the U.S. Additionally, we ask that you convene a larger working group consisting of Democratic and Republican Members of Congress and Senators, as well as relevant Cabinet and Sub-Cabinet level appointees and Agency heads. USDA is the nation's preeminent anti-hunger organization and should take the lead in fighting hunger and improving nutrition, but it is not the only Department or Agency that is impacted by hunger and nutrition. We believe interagency collaboration is necessary in any plan to employ innovative approaches to end childhood hunger by 2015. It is for that reason that, at a minimum, we believe representatives from the Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office on Management and Budget, and Centers for Disease Control be included in this larger working group.

We are encouraged by President Obama's commitment to ending child hunger by 2015 and we are encouraged by the first steps you've taken at USDA. We want to be partners with you on this effort and we look forward to meeting with you and working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



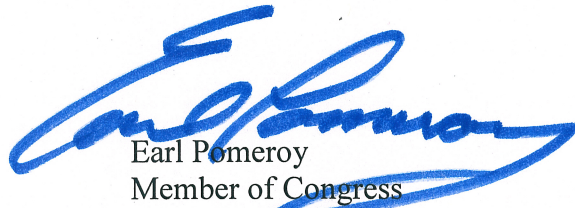
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Jo Ann Emerson
Member of Congress

Jerry Moran

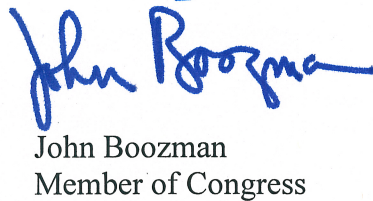
Jerry Moran
Member of Congress



Earl Pomeroy
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



John Boozman
Member of Congress